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FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

LS 6184

BILL NUMBER: SB 65

NOTE PREPARED: Jan 28, 2005

BILL AMENDED: Jan 27, 2005

SUBJECT: Notifying Coroner.

FIRST AUTHOR: Sen. Zakas

FIRST SPONSOR:

BILL STATUS: CR Adopted - 1st House

FUNDS AFFECTED: **GENERAL**
 DEDICATED
 FEDERAL

IMPACT: Local

Summary of Legislation: This bill requires the administrator of a health facility to report the death of a resident to the coroner.

Effective Date: July 1, 2005.

Explanation of State Expenditures:

Explanation of State Revenues:

Explanation of Local Expenditures: *Summary:* Depending upon individual circumstances, this bill could have a significant statewide impact on county coroners and local law enforcement, depending upon the number of individuals that die in nursing facilities under circumstances that are not currently reported to county coroners. State Department of Health statistical reports demonstrate that approximately 25% of discharges from Indiana nursing facilities are due to death. In 2003, 16,029 individuals died in nursing facilities. The number of these deaths that may have also been reported to a county coroner due to unusual circumstances is not known. The manner in which individual coroners will respond to the reports and the additional cost to counties cannot be determined.

Background Information: This bill would require that the administrator of a nursing facility report all deaths of residents to the county coroner. Only deaths that occur under currently reportable circumstances are reported by nursing facilities to the coroner. Most coroners rely on the expertise of the physician on call and the nursing staff of the facilities to determine if the coroner should be notified since death is not an unusual outcome for

nursing facility residents. The bill provides that the coroner may investigate the deaths reported by nursing facilities. The Marion County Coroner's Office reports that this amount of reporting would be burdensome for the Coroner's Office since they would be obligated to respond to the scene with a deputy coroner. The Cass County coroner indicated that the nursing facility report to the coroner would obligate the rural county coroners to have some response, possibly involving local law enforcement, to do an initial investigation.

Because the bill requires the facility administrator to report all deaths, the number of deaths that currently may be reported because individual circumstances meet the current reporting requirements is unknown. The manner in which individual coroners will respond to the reports and the additional cost to counties cannot be determined.

Explanation of Local Revenues:

State Agencies Affected:

Local Agencies Affected: County coroner's offices and local law enforcement.

Information Sources: John Linehan, Chief Deputy Coroner, Marion County, 317-327-4744; Gene Powlen, Cass County Coroner and President, Indiana Coroner's Association, 574-722-5151; and "Indiana State Department of Health Long Term Care 2003 County Statistical Profile and 2007 Bed Needs Assessment at: <http://www.in.gov/isdh/regsvcs/acc/lcstats/2003.htm#5>.

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